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A Red-Hot Massage

An Ethiopian Farce

IN ONE SCENE

BY

LEVIN C. TEES

Author of "Tatters," "Botany Bay," "Mrs. Pepper's Ghost," etc.

Philadelphia

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1894

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A RED-HOT MESSAGE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DOCTOR DOSEMALL, a physician in hard luck.

FARMER ONIONS, an unwilling victim to science.

TIME IN PLAYING, 15 MINUTES

PROPERTIES

Table, with half a dozen books. Four chairs. A common canvas cot. A bath-tub, with lid, which closed, shows hole big enough for a man's neck—this tub can be made of shelving boards or of stout pasteboard, glued together—it must have only the top and sides, but no bottom, giving chance for Onions' business at the finale. Carpet-bag and old umbrella for Onions. Visting-cards for Doctor. A couple of tin pans concealed in Onions' clothing—one over breast, the other over back. Hammer, saw, broad-axe, hay-rake, and property base-ball bat (stuffed) for Doctor. Big horse-pistol for Doctor. Red fire ready R. and L. entrance at finale. On large stages, have trap open with red fire ready to flash up as per stage directions.

COSTUMES

DOCTOR DOSEMALL.—A gay young physician. Neat, everyday business suit.

FARMER ONIONS.—A droll, old colored farmer. Fright wig, white hat. Cow-hide boots, ragged pants, stuffed into boots. He wears a half-dozen ragged coats of different colors, the top coat being a large one made of a horse blanket. The more eccentric this character can be dressed, the better the effect.



A RED-HOT MASSAGE

SCENE.—DR. DOSEMALL'S office in 3 G. *Double door c. in flat with curtains. Practical window in U. L. E. Table c., with books, chairs about room, sofa down L. C. A cot up R. C. Down R. C. is a bath-tub large enough to hold a man. Over the top of the tub is a lid with an opening large enough for FARMER ONIONS to protrude his neck through, concealing all of his body in the tub but his head. Enter DOCTOR C. from L.*

DOCTOR. (*door-bell rings furiously*) Who is that? More bill-collectors? (*Looks out of window, L. U. E.*) As I live, it is a patient. He is examining the shingle: "Massage treatment, the afflicted taken in and done for." That is my last hope. I've tried allopathy, homœopathy, surgery, and pulling teeth, but the public wouldn't nibble. Now I'll try the massage treatment, and if that doesn't catch 'em I'll starve. (*Calls out of window*) Walk right in, old gentleman; the door is open. (*Goes to C. D. and looks off L.*) Ah! here he comes. Walk right into the office, my dear sir.

Enter FARMER ONIONS, with carpet-bag, old umbrella, etc.

How are you, sir? My dear fellow, I'm rejoiced to see you. (*Takes both of ONIONS'S hands and shakes them heartily. Business of ONIONS dropping his carpet-bag and umbrella and his hat falling off.*)

ONIONS. Good morning.

DOCTOR. Good morning, sir. How do you do, sir? (*Business of shaking ONIONS'S hands until the latter nearly falls to pieces.*)

ONIONS. Is you de man what owns de place?

DOCTOR. Yes, sir. I'm the proprietor of the establishment. Sit down, sir. Rest yourself in this easy-chair. (*Pushes him into chair*) It is a good thing you came to me when you did, for in ten minutes you would have been a dead man.

ONIONS. (*jumping up alarmed*) What is dat?

DOCTOR. I said in ten minutes, if you hadn't come to me, you'd have been a dead man. But have no fear. I'll save you. Keep easy and have faith in your doctor.

ONIONS. What dat you talking 'bout? What doctor?

DOCTOR. I'm the doctor. Here, sir, have a card. (*Gives card*) Dr. Dosemall, the great specialist.

ONIONS. I didn't know dis was a 'pothecary shop. (*Takes his carpet-bag and umbrella, and moves toward door.*)

DOCTOR. Where are you going?

ONIONS. I'm going home. I thought dis was a restaurant.

DOCTOR. A restaurant! Great Cæsar! does this look like a restaurant?

ONIONS. Den what you got dat sign on the front door?

DOCTOR. That sign?

ONIONS. Yes, dat sign. Don't it say sausages?

DOCTOR. No, sir. (*Aside*) This jay mistook my massage sign for a sausage advertisement. That sign says massage treatment. I am a massage specialist.

ONIONS. What am dat?

DOCTOR. It is the art of healing by the manipulation of the hands. I disrobe you, and under the skillful manipulation of my fingers your pains will disappear, your aches turn to actual joy.

ONIONS. You must be a pretty smart man.

DOCTOR. I am. I'm full of science up to my chin.

ONIONS. Yes, you look dat way.

DOCTOR. Now let me diagnose your disease. Why, my dear sir, I can see right through you.

ONIONS. Don't tell me dat.

DOCTOR. Yes, sir, right through the centre of your body. Why, your heart is as visible to my sight as that clock is to yours.

ONIONS. Am it still ticking?

DOCTOR. What, the clock?

ONIONS. No, my heart.

DOCTOR. Very feebly. It makes about one pulsation every twenty-four hours. Just sit down a moment. I want to test your lungs. (*DOCTOR gets a hammer, advances on ONIONS, who has become alarmed, seizes him by throat, and forces him back into chair again.*)

ONIONS. (*struggling out of the chair and falling on his knees*) Don't murder me, Mister Doctor!

DOCTOR. Keep quiet! Your life depends upon it. (*ONIONS has a tin pan concealed under the front of his vest. DOCTOR hits this with a hammer, making a terrible racket.*)

ONIONS. Mercy! Mister Doctor! mercy!

DOCTOR. What did I tell you? One lung is all gone and

there is only a piece of the other one left. Turn over! I want to examine your liver. (*Takes ONIONS by the neck and throws him on his face. Then hits him in back with the hammer, ONIONS having a piece of tin concealed there to make a noise.*) Christopher Columbus! Your liver is the size of a balloon, and your gizzard's busted! (*Throws off his coat and rolls up his sleeves*) This requires heroic treatment, or you'll die on my hands.

DOCTOR *rushes up and down the room, picks up a saw and a broad-axe.* ONIONS *sits on floor, looking at the DOCTOR in horror and amazement.*

ONIONS. What you going to do, Doctor?

DOCTOR. I'll save you, or risk my professional reputation.

ONIONS. I guess I'll get out of here. Dat man's crazy.

Business of ONIONS trying to sneak out the door. He has nearly escaped when DOCTOR intercepts him, seizes him by collar, and brings him down to footlights.

DOCTOR. You don't escape me. You're my first patient, and I'm not going to lose you. How much money have you?

ONIONS. Ain't got a cent!

DOCTOR. Is that the truth?

ONIONS. 'Deed and double it am, Doctor. I left all de money home in de safe.

DOCTOR. Very well! I'll treat you gratis.

ONIONS. But I don't want to be treated. O Doctor! let me go and I'll never come here again.

DOCTOR. (*flourishing horse-pistol which he takes from a drawer*) You can't escape me! Strip!

ONIONS. What am dat?

DOCTOR. Take off your clothes, you booby!

ONIONS. O Doctor! I couldn't do dat.

DOCTOR. (*levelling pistol*) Take off your coat. How can I massage you with your clothes on. Quick or you're a dead man. (*ONIONS takes off his coat in a hurry; other coats of different colors seen underneath.*) The other coat. (*ONIONS takes off second coat.*) The other onc. (*This scene can be carried on ad libitum.*) That will do. Now lie down on that cot.

ONIONS. (*terrified*) What you going to do, Doctor?

DOCTOR. Do as I tell you. Lie down on that cot.

ONIONS. It is all up wid me. Oh! I wish I had knowed

dis was a 'pothecary shop. (*He lies on cot. DOCTOR comes forward with a big hay rake.*) What's dat for?

DOCTOR. I'm going to massage you, you fool. One moment please until I make you tender. (*Takes up a property base-ball bat (stuffed) and begins beating ONIONS with it. ONIONS dashes to window, tries to jump out, but DOCTOR seizes him and pulls him back. Throws him again on cot.*) Now for the massage process! (*Begins rubbing ONIONS with the rake, ONIONS crying murder, etc., ad libitum.*) That will do. You are massaged. Do you feel better?

ONIONS. Oh! I'm nearly dead.

DOCTOR. I see what's the matter! I'll fix you. You require my sweat bath. (*DOCTOR seizes ONIONS and pulls him toward the bath-tub, down R. C.*) Get in there!

ONIONS. O Doctor! what you going to do now?

DOCTOR. I'm going to save your life. Get in there. (*Picks ONIONS up and hustles him into the bath-tub.*) Sit down, you jay, or I'll knock you down!

ONIONS. It is all up wid me! Oh! if my poor children could see me now. (*ONIONS sits down in bath-tub and DOCTOR closes the lids leaving nothing visible of ONIONS but his head.*)

DOCTOR. Now, old fellow, I'm got you just where I want you. I'm going through your clothes.

ONIONS. Don't rob me, Doctor. I ain't got a cent.

DOCTOR. I'll see about that. (*Pulls big wallet out of ONIONS'S coat which is lying on a chair.*) Not a cent, eh? Why you miserable wretch this wallet is full of money. (*Counts notes*) There is enough here to take me to Canada.

ONIONS. Drop that! I'll call de police. Police! Police!

DOCTOR. (*seizing axe*) I'll silence your cries. No! (*Drops axe.*) I'll burn the house and you with it! (*Rushes out.*)

ONIONS. If I don't get out of here, I'll be a roast coon!

The stage becomes crimson from red lights. Flames dart up through trap in floor. ONIONS gives a yell of agony and upsets the bath-tub, his legs seen kicking through the bottom of the tub, while his head, enclosed in the lid, is visible at the top as he continues to cry for help until the curtain falls.

CURTAIN

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